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ABSTRACT

The four initial general goals of the projects, funded under Title I of the 1965 Elementary Secondary Education Act, are: (1) to raise the achievement level of the target group children; (2) to increase the overall participation of parents in school related affairs; (3) to attempt to influence parents' competence in dealing with their everyday problems; and, (4) to increase the staff's involvement in the community's life. The evaluation design focuses on three sources of information: (1) student activities, including tutorial services; (2) student scores from the Title I testing program of May 1971; and, (3) parent activities. Only about half of the agents were successful in providing information on their effects relating to activities and services provided the students and the students' parents in the target groups. The changes in achievement level of the target group students could not be assessed because of the lack of pre- and posttest scores, at the elementary level. Almost two-thirds of the parents of Target Group students participated in one or more activities. Over three-fourths of the students, in 18 schools, participated in one or more activities not directly a part of their classroom instruction. (Author/JM)

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THE EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY AGENTS PROJECT

1970 - 1971

Funded Under Title I of the
Elementary-Secondary Education Act

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THE EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY AGENTS PROJECT

Description of the Program

During the 1970-71 school year, the School-Community Agents Program undertook a major restructuring and redefinition of its purposes and operation so as to more closely conform to Title I guidelines. The central principle guiding the refocusing of the agent role was that agent functions would be directed toward raising the achievement level of students. By this, it was not meant that the agent would assume responsibilities traditionally prescribed to the classroom teacher. Because of the unique character of the agent's office, the agent would be able to function beyond the environs of the classroom to facilitate and focus the behaviors of others toward providing for those conditions which would help students achieve a more satisfactory level of performance. In an initial redefinition of the agents' role, the underlying assumptions guiding redirection of effort were stated:

1. The agent needs to be an integral part of the educational team which works together to raise the achievement level of students.

2. The active participation of parents in all phases of the school's life is beneficial.

3. The involvement of school staff needs to occur in additional processes complementary to their academic methods.

It was decided that the vehicle by which agents could most effectively function vis-a-vis the new role definition was to focus their efforts on a small group of students in each of their respective schools. The selection of students for membership in the target group was based on Title I guidelines, with those students chosen for intensive agent services being identified as the School-Community Agent's Title I Target Group in each of the agent schools.

Implementation of the newly defined role called for the development of an educational team at the local school level. This was consistent with the first of the underlying assumptions guiding the redirection of the agent role. While there was variation in the size and in the composition of the educational teams formed, the teams did reflect an attempt to draw from a diversity of sources directly involved in the students' welfare. Thus, apart from administration and faculty representation, educational teams included many of the following persons: school nurses, school social workers, parents, school-community assistants, school psychologists, reading coordinators, curriculum leaders, teacher aides, attendance teachers, teacher union representatives, and speech therapists.

To a large degree, the 1970-1971 school year was a transition period for the agents. Much time and effort was devoted to developing new role definitions, establishing operational methodologies and working out implementation strategies, while at the same time, the agents continued to fulfill many of the school and community based expectations. The agents were faced not only with the task of assimilating a new set of role prescriptions and proscriptions, but with the task of creating legitimation for the obligations and expectation attached to the new role in the eyes of others. As a consequence, not all agents were able to provide a record of activities for the purpose of evaluation at the end of the school year. In a few cases, agents did not progress beyond the stages of educational team formation and target group selection. As will be seen below, lack of progress toward assumption of the new role was most characteristic of agents who served in secondary schools.

Program Objectives

In view of the transitional character of the 1970-1971 school year, the four general objectives stated in the early part of the year are overly ambitious. This is not to say that the objectives, if defined as general goals toward which the agents, together with the educational teams, would strive to achieve were not consonant with Title I purposes. But, from the perspective of generating sufficient data to evaluate the activities of the agents, the objects were more aspiration than expectation, given the uneven progress made in the implementation of the new role.

Thus, from a practical consideration, evidence relative to attainment of three of the initial objectives, from a broadly interpretive perspective, will be presented below. Before discussing evaluation procedures the four initial general objects of the School Community Agents Projects are as follows:

1. Raise the achievement level of the target group children.
2. Increase the over-all participation of parents in school related affairs.
3. Attempts to influence parents' competency in dealing with their everyday problems.
4. Increase the staff's involvement in the community's life.

Evaluation Procedures

The evaluation design focuses on three sources of information:

1. Student activities, including tutorial services,
2. Student scores from the Title I Testing Program of May 1971, and
3. Parent Activities

A four page "Student Target Group Data Form" was developed in cooperation with a committee of agents. This form was used by the agents to record the following kinds of information for each student in the Target Group: School

performance and citizenship marks, attendance and tutorial information, standardized test results, a limited amount of demographic information about the student's family, student activities and services, and parent activities. The last two named were check lists.

Beginning in May (1971) and extending into June, a series of tabulation sheets were sent to the agents. These tabulation sheets provided for the transfer of specific categories of data in summary form from the Student Target Group Data Form.

By the end of September, 19 of the 39 School-Community Agents had returned the tabulation sheets from which the data presented in the evaluation were obtained. In addition, a separate listing of student Title I Testing identification numbers was received from 21 agents. From this list, computer data cards containing Title I Testing results were obtained and were incorporated in the computer processing of the main body of evaluation data.

Analysis of the Data

Table 1 displays the percentage of target group students who participated in activities or were the recipients of services listed in the Table provided through the efforts of the school-community agents working in conjunction with the local educational team in each school. Table 2 presents the total percentage per activity or service, or the marginal totals in Table 1. As may be observed in Table 1, there is a wide degree of variation between schools in percent of target group students participating in the activities and as recipients of services listed. With reference to frequency percentage totals per activity or service, presented in Table 2, between one-fourth and almost two-fifths of the target group students were tutored, attended at least one school dance, and participated in an after-school or weekend trip. The majority of remaining

categories had frequencies of approximately 10 percent or less. However, of particular interest is the fact that 16 percent of the target group students received some form of medical examination.

In more aggregate terms, with the exclusion of one school where no student activities or services were recorded, 77 percent of the total target group in 18 schools were provided one or more activity or service and the mean number per student was 3.2. For this sub-sample of students, the agents show an impressive record considering the transitional character of the 1970-1971 school year.

Table 1

Activities and Services Provided Title I Target Group Students by Percent of Target Group Students Per School Involved

SCHOOL	(N)	Activities and Services: Teacher Helper	Organized school wide services	School club participation	School club-- New member	In-school tutoring	Homestudy tutoring	School Assembly	After school forum
Burton	38	13.2	18.4	0	0	23.7	0	0	0
Chaney	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Couzens	32	15.6	6.2	15.6	0	46.9	37.5	0	0
Campbell	34	0	0	58.8	0	0	0	0	0
Ferry	23	0	0	21.7	0	0	0	0	0
George	33	0	9.1	12.1	0	18.2	0	0	0
Kennedy	15	0	13.3	20.0	0	100	0	0	0
Moore	24	0	4.2	25.0	0	95.8	0	0	0
Owen	16	93.8	6.2	25.0	0	100	0	75.0	0
Williams	56	16.1	12.5	3.6	0	0	0	0	0
Sherrard Jr. High	60	25.0	10.0	38.3	0	98.3	0	85.0	35.0
McMichael Jr. High	30	0	0	6.7	0	26.7	0	0	0
Bunche	41	46.3	14.6	2.4	0	29.3	24.4	12.2	0
Bellevue	79	0	0	10.1	0	97.5	0	24.1	0
Duffield	43	0	0	4.7	0	0	9.3	0	0
Harris	54	40.7	16.7	16.7	3.7	0	0	0	1.9
Marcy	37	8.1	24.3	89.2	10.8	2.7	0	5.4	0
Pingree	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scripps	47	2.1	2.1	2.1	0	57.4	0	0	0
N	708	95	54	128	22	268	26	89	22
Percent		13.4	7.6	18.1	3.1	37.9	3.7	12.6	3.1

Table 1 (Continued)

Activities and Services										
Assignment and participation of group worker	Psychological testing	Treatment counseling	Sports event, spectator	Sports event, participant	School Dance	Trip: After-school, weekend	Formal organization	Formal organization (new member)	Medical examination	Treatment: in or out-patient
0	0	7.9	0	2.6	0	0	0	0	18.4	7.9
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	3.1	53.1	46.9	0	50.0	0	0	25.0	9.4
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.8	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	6.7	0	0	13.3	0	100.0	0	0	0	0
4.2	0	54.2	95.8	95.8	91.7	0	4.2	0	95.8	0
50.0	43.8	93.8	6.2	0	6.2	6.2	0	6.2	37.5	12.5
5.4	0	3.6	0	0	92.9	0	8.9	0	0	0
16.7	3.3	1.7	45.0	21.7	60.0	48.3	0	0	98.3	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.3	0
0	14.6	9.8	24.4	24.4	14.6	9.8	0	0	9.8	12.2
8.9	0	19.0	3.8	10.1	0	38.0	0	0	0	3.8
39.5	2.3	23.3	0	0	0	7.0	16.3	0	2.3	2.3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
97.3	13.5	10.8	13.5	35.1	45.9	83.8	0	0	0	0
0	0	19.0	0	0	0	42.9	0	0	4.8	4.8
0	2.1	14.1	4.3	12.8	61.7	70.2	2.1	0	4.3	0
82	23	81	88	91	163	171	21	1	112	18
11.6	3.2	11.4	12.4	12.9	23.0	24.2	3.0	0.1	15.8	2.5

Table 1 (Contd)

Activities and Services									
Prosthesis	Dental examination	Dental treatment	Dental prosthesis	Job interview training	Interview with employer	Training in behavior skill	Seeking employment	Obtaining employment	Conference
5.3	2.6	2.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12.5	3.1	3.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	93.3	0	0	0	0	0
0	95.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.2	10.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43.8
0	3.3	17.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15.0	0	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.9	7.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1.3	0	11.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	2.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19.0
2.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	42	23	0	14	0	0	0	0	11
3.1	5.9	3.2	0	2.0	0	0	0	0	1.6

Table 2

Activities and Services Provided Title I Target Group Students by Per Cent of Target Group Students Involved Per Activity or Service (N=708)

Activity or Service	Per Cent	Activity or Service	Per Cent
Teacher Helper	13.4	Formal organization	3.0
Organized school wide services	7.6	Formal organization (New Member)	0.1
School Club Participation	18.1	Medical examination	15.1
School Club-New Member	3.1	Treatment in or out-patient	2.5
In-school tutoring	37.9	Prosthesis	3.1
Homestudy tutoring	3.7	Dental examination	5.9
School Assembly	12.6	Dental treatment	3.2
After school forum	3.1	Dental prosthesis	0
Assignment and Participation of group worker	11.6	Job interview training	2.0
Psychological testing	3.2	Interview with employer	0
Sports events, spectator	12.4	Training in behavior skill	0
Sports events, participant	12.9	Seeking employment	0
School Dance	23.0	Obtaining employment	0
Trip: After-school, weekend	24.2	Conferences	1.6

Table 3 displays mean grade-equivalent scores on various Stanford Achievement sub-tests. These formed the battery of tests used in the Title I testing program for elementary level target group students. The lack of baseline data in the form of pretest scores precludes any analysis of the effectiveness of the School-Community Agents Program in raising the academic performance of the target group students. However, from an internal comparative perspective, it may be observed that students in Grade One were performing near norm expectations, and, in the case of the Paragraph Meaning sub-test, the mean grade-equivalent score was above normal. In Grades Two through Six mean scores were below grade norm. At Grade Six, the amount of retardation, per sub-test, ranged from 2 years and 7 months to 2 years and 3 months. Also, beginning with Grade Five, the amount of retardation per sub-test is fixed at two years, plus, whereas in Grades One through Four, the amount of retardation did not exceed two years.

Table 3

Mean Grade Equivalent Scores on Various Stanford Achievement Sub-Tests by Grade

Sub-Test	Grades											
	One		Two		Three		Four		Five		Six	
	Mean	(N)*	Mean	(N)*	Mean	(N)*	Mean	(N)*	Mean	(N)*	Mean	(N)*
Word Meaning[1]	1.5	37	1.7	78	2.1	108	3.3	79	3.3	102	4.4	80
Paragraph Meaning	2.1	28	1.7	76	2.3	108	3.0	79	3.1	101	4.2	81
Spelling	1.5	15	1.9	61	2.2	61	-	-	-	-	-	-
Word Study Skills	1.4	28	1.7	69	2.0	74	-	-	-	-	-	-
Language[2]	-	-	-	-	2.5	47	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arithmetic Computation	-	-	-	-	2.6	105	3.3	78	3.5	101	4.1	79
Arithmetic Concepts[3]	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3	76	3.3	101	4.6	77
Arithmetic Applications	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.2	77	3.4	101	4.2	78

*Number of Students
[1]Word Reading for Grades One and Two
[2]Vocabulary for Grades One and Two
[3]Arithmetic for Grades One and Two

Table 4 presents tutorial information for those target group students at the elementary level, tested in the Title I Testing Program, by grade placement. As may be observed from inspecting Table 4, there is wide variation among the grades in terms of total hours per week of tutoring and total hours of tutoring. The highest concentration of tutorial service was in the first and in the third grades. It should be noted that in some cases, tutorial services had been provided students through other programs prior to their selection as target group members. However, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the agent program, including of the tutorial component, in relation to raising academic achievement will have to wait until next year when posttest achievement scores will be available for measuring gains or lack of gains between May 1971 and May 1972.

Table 4

Means of Days per Week, Hours per Week, Total Weeks, Total Hours of Tutoring Received for Students Taking Title I Test Battery by Grade Placement

Tutorial Information	Grade Placement One Mean	(N)*	Two Mean	(N)*	Three Mean	(N)*	Four Mean	(N)*	Five Mean	(N)*	Six Mean	(N)
Days per Week of Tutoring	3.14	28	3.11	53	2.95	67	3.00	49	3.30	46	3.40	40
Hrs. per week of Tutoring	3.71	28	2.43	53	4.09	67	2.89	49	2.93	46	3.30	40
Total Weeks of Tutoring	22.33	27	10.29	41	16.98	65	18.89	49	15.97	46	19.44	38
Total Hours of Tutoring	94.55	27	26.84	53	90.64	67	56.34	49	42.91	45	54.56	39

*Number of Students

The range of activities in which parents of the Target Group Students participated by per cent per activity is displayed in Table 5. The activities in which the range of percentage of students' parents participation is between ten and thirty-two were those that were directly related to the students progress in school. These activities included parent-teacher conferences, school visits regarding disciplinary problems and academic work, and classroom visits for observation. More school-wide concerns such as attending school ceremonies and P.T.A. meeting attracted thirteen and twelve per cent, respectively. The remaining activities, which would reflect activities relating to the parents' competency to deal with problems or wider community involvements, show a much smaller proportion of students' parents participating. Viewed from the above breakdown of activities, the agents were most successful in involving parents in school-based, school-related activities, and least successful in other types of activities.

Table 6 presents the number of activities in which the students' parents participated. Less than two-fifths of the students' parents did not participate in any activity. Over two-fifths participated in one or two activities, and the remaining one-fifth participated in two or more activities.

Table 5

Per Cent of Target Group Students Whose Parents Participated in Activities Provided by Agents Per Activity (N=734)

Activity	Per Cent
Classroom visit for observation	10.5
School visit regarding student disciplinary problem	16.6
School visit regarding student's academic work	14.6
Regular school Parent-Teacher conference	31.5
School related social events: Training in social skills	2.7
School ceremonies, parties, socials	13.2
Volunteer service, e.g., homeroom mother, emergency corps	2.6
P.T.A. meeting	12.0
Curriculum committee meeting	0.1
Discipline committee meeting	0.1
School advisory council or group	2.7
Consumer Education workshop	1.2
Leadership Training workshop	0.3
Voter Education	0.1
Local school and/or Region conference regarding policy, procedure, problems	1.1
In-service training teacher-parent workshop	1.5
Home-study Instructional Materials workshop	0.3
Inter-school mobility, i.e., feeder policy, or graduation requirements, or academic performance standard workshops	0.1

Table 5 (Contd)

Activity	Per Cent
Tutorial training for parents' workshop	0.1
Youth serving agency meeting, e.g., scouts	1.2
Community institutional group meeting, e.g., police precinct committee	0.1
Block Club meeting (Activities with locale other than school)	0.3
Youth serving agency meeting, e.g., scouts	0
Community institutional group meeting e.g., police precinct committee	0.3
Block Club Meeting	0.1
Community leadership training workshop	0
Home meeting-all types	6.9
Home meeting-all types (Hosting)	0.5
Camping	2.0
Enrolment in R.E.A.D. program	0.4
Enrolment in DPA day or evening classes	0
Enrolment in a community college, e.g., WCCC	0.3
Enrolment in a four-year college, e.g., DIT	0
Enrolment in a university, e.g., WSU	0
Visits of a teacher, attendance officer	6.9
Medical-Dental (Prosthesis: glasses)	2.0

Table 6

Number of Activities Per Target Group Students Whose Parents Participated in Activities Provided by Agents By Number and Per Cent

Number Of Activities	Number	Per Cent
None	270	37
One	190	26
Two	124	17
Three	83	11
Four	38	5
Five	12	2
Six	13	2
Seven	1	*
Eight	1	*
Nine	1	*
Sixteen	1	*
Total	734	100

*Less than 0.01%

Evaluation Summary

Assessment of the effectiveness of the School-Community Agents Project will not be based upon the four initial general objectives, i.e., the objectives that were proposed soon after the agent role was restructured to conform to Title I guidelines and which are presented above. Rather, the effectiveness of the project will be based upon a redefinition of these objectives in light of the data made available for project evaluation. This change is predicated upon two considerations. The first of these is that the initially stated objectives were developed prior to the actual implementation of the agents' new role, and, as a consequence, were more ambitious than judicious in their expectations. Secondly, since the data developed for the evaluation do not always conform with these statements of objectives, it is pointless to try fitting, in a sense, a square peg into round hole. Before summarizing the evidence in terms of redefined objectives, it should be made clear that only about half of the a ents were successful in providing information on their effects relating to activities and services provided the students and the students' parents in the target groups.

Objective: To Raise the Achievement Level of the Target Group Students

The attainment of this objective could not be determined because of the lack of pre- and posttest scores, at the elementary level, where Title I testing data was to be used to evaluate student achievement. Since only two schools at the secondary level provided information on student grades, no data processing was undertaken. However, the means of the scores from the Title I Testing Program for those elementary level students receiving tutorial service were somewhat below the means in their respective schools. This was to be expected, since the students selected for target group membership were to

be the low achieving students. Next years' report will be more definitive with pre- and posttest data available.

Objective: To provide for the over-all participation of parents in school related affairs

Almost two-thirds of the parents of Target Group students participated in one or more activities. The majority of the participating parents were involved in activities which were school related. The agents were successful in achievin this objective.

Objective: To provide for the participation of students in school activities not directly a part of their classroom instruction

Over three-fourth of the students, in eighteen schools, participated in one or more activity not directly a part of their classroom instruction. This also was indicative of agent success.

Next year's evaluation of the effectiveness of the agents in providing for the participation of parents and of students in school-related activities for the former and in non-classroom instructional activities for the latter wil be structured in terms of specific behavioral objectives.

Recommendations

In view of the fact that the 1970-1971 program year was essentially one of transition for the School-Community Agents Project, the focus of any proffered recommendations would be upon the need, on the part of the agents, to put into operation all the various components of their new role. If the 1970-1971 progr year is defined as one in which the agents experimented and developed their new role, then the 1971-1972 program year should show the fruits of this 'training period.'

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